

## **“Maybe English first and then *Balinese* and *Bahasa Indonesia*”: A case of language shift, attrition, and preference**

Siana Linda Bonafix\*

*Lembaga Pengembangan Profesi, Universitas Taruma Negara, Jakarta*

Christine Manara

*Program Pasca Sarjana, Linguistik Terapan Bahasa Inggris,  
Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya, Jakarta*

### **Abstract**

This small-scale qualitative study aims to explore the participants' view of languages acquired, learned, and used in their family in an Indonesian context. The two participants were Indonesians who came from multilingual and mixed-cultural family background. The study explores three research questions: 1) What are the languages acquired (by the participants' family members), co-existed, and/or shift in the family of the two speakers? 2) What factors affect the dynamicity of these languages? 3) How do the participants perceive their self-identity? The qualitative data were collected using semi-structured and in-depth interviews. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed to be analyzed using thematic analysis. The study detects local language shift to Indonesian from one generation to the next in the participants' family. The data also shows several factors for valorizing particular languages than the others. These factors include socioeconomic factor, education, frequency of contact, areas of upbringing (rural or urban) and attitude towards the language. The study also reveals that both participants identify their self-identity based on the place where they were born and grew up instead of their linguistic identity.

**Keywords:** bilingualism, bilinguality, language dynamics, valorization, mix-cultural families

### **Introduction**

Indonesia is a big multicultural and multilingual country. It is reported in 2016 that the population of the country is 257 million (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, National Statistics Bureau). The country consists of over 13,000 islands with significant number of distinct ethnic groups and of about 706 local languages (Lewis, Simons, and Fenning, 2013 as cited in Cohn and Ravindrananth, 2014). This diversity has led challenges and urgency to unite the nation to choose and develop one national language (Paauw, 2009). The selection and the installation of *Bahasa Indonesia* as the

\*Direct all correspondence to: [sianaedu3@gmail.com](mailto:sianaedu3@gmail.com)

national language since 1945 have brought effect on the increase use of the language in all facets of Indonesian society's life. *Bahasa Indonesia*, as Wright (2004) explained, has had dual functions in Indonesian society: 1) the language of national identity, and 2) the language of education, literacy, modernization and social mobility (in Paauw 2009, p.5). As a result, the censuses conducted in 1971, 1980 and 1990 showed an increase of people who speak Indonesian as their first language especially among the young generation (Musgrave, 2011). The essential factors contributing the rapid development of Indonesian as the national language are education and urbanization (Paauw 2009). This means that there is a change of the position of the local languages.

The rapid development of Indonesian as the national language influences the position of local languages in Indonesia. Although the position of local languages in Indonesia society is guaranteed for its existence and development by the Indonesian constitution, their domains of use are limited (Nababan 1991 as cited in Paauw 2009, p.5). Moreover, in terms of official languages, Indonesia is monolingual since only Bahasa Indonesia gains the status of a national language (Cohn & Ravindrananth, 2014). In most cases, local language becomes the home domain and socialization language among friends. The increase use of Indonesian in more domains of local languages shows serious threat of local languages. Moreover, the local languages are not always passed on to the next generation (Cohn & Ravindrananth, 2014). As revealed by Paauw (2009), the use of Indonesian as the medium of instruction from primary school through university throughout the nation brings a huge impact to the development of *Bahasa Indonesia*. The increase of urbanization also contributes to the rapid spread of *Bahasa Indonesia*. The urban communities coming from different ethnic backgrounds have the need of a language for wider communication, and this need is occupied by *Bahasa Indonesia*. Furthermore, urban societies contribute to the local languages shift to Indonesian as L1 (Nababan 1985 as cited in Paauw 2009, p.7).

In addition to *Bahasa Indonesia* as the national language and the local languages, some foreign languages are used in Indonesia for many purposes. Among those foreign languages, it is widely known that English is important for Indonesia since English is a global or international language (Lauder 2008, p.10). The global status of English is gained partly because of the growing number of the speakers which was estimated 1.75 billion by the British Council in the year of 2013 (*English Effect*, 2013). English today is also used in a wide range of fields such as politics, diplomacy, international trade and industry, commerce, science and technology, education, the media, information technology, and popular culture (Crystal 2003, Huda, 2000, Jenkins 2003 as cited in Lauder 2008, p. 10). Although English in Indonesia has no official status, its presence can strongly be felt with the

growing numbers of transnational companies in big cities in Indonesia. To complicate matters, globalization allows other foreign languages and cultures to flow across borders. This can be observed from the growing interests in learning Standard Chinese and Korean languages. The flow of foreign languages adds to the richness of local linguistic and cultural terrains in Indonesia. These languages may co-exist and/or compete with the local languages. In this situation, it is possible that people may acquire a new language or lose the languages he/she has acquired previously.

It has been reported that some factors such as migration, education and mixed marriages lead to language shift. Many studies conducted still focused on the language shifts among the immigrant minorities. Among them are studies conducted on the language shift in the three generations in immigrant families (Ortman & Stevens, 2008; Tan & Ng, 2010; Zhang, 2004, 2010) since Fishman (1991) revealed that the language shift is usually completed in three generations. However, there are not many studies investigating language shift in a multilingual country like Indonesia. This study looks at the multilingual and multicultural Indonesians' views of the languages used in their families. This small-scale study was guided with the following research questions:

- 1) What are the languages acquired, co-existed, and/or shift in the family of the participants?
- 2) What factors affect the dynamicity of these languages?
- 3) How do the participants perceive their self-identity?

### **Language Shift and Maintenance**

In a bilingual or multilingual context, language shift, language maintenance and language loss are a common phenomenon. Mesthrie, Deumer, and Leap (2009) describes language shift as “the replacement of one language by another as the primary means of communication and socialization within a community” (p. 245). Language shift, as explained by Hornberger (2010), is marked by the loss of number of speakers, level of proficiency, or functional use of the language. Language shift takes place when the speakers choose to abandon their language, either voluntarily or under pressure, and adopt another language that takes over as their means of communication and socialization (Batibo, 2005, p. 87).

Fishman (1991, p.1) explains that language shift occurs when the intergenerational continuation of native languages are threatened with fewer users in each generation. Fishman's “three-generation model” summarizes the stages of language shift within the three generations: the first or the immigrant generation keeps speaking their native language; the second generation becomes bilingual by learning their parents' mother tongue at home while learning English outside home; the third generation learns only

English (in Ortman & Stevens, 2008). The events can happen within the individual or within the society.

Sociolinguists discuss some main factors that contribute to language shift. Batibo (1992) reveals these factors are economic change, size of speech community, urbanization and relative degree of language prestige. In a similar vein, Holmes (2008) categorizes three main factors: 1) economic, social and political factors, 2) demographic reasons; and 3) attitudes and values. Michieka (2012) expands the discussion to include language policy, context of one's upbringing (whether rural or urban), parents' education levels, nature of parents' marriages (inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic) and users' attitudes towards the languages in question as factors influencing language shift.

In terms of demographic factors, Holmes (2008) describes that demographic factors are connected to rural and urban areas, the size of group and intermarriage. Areas where people live may contribute to language shift. People in rural area use their native language to fulfill all of their daily needs in their context. Urban society, on the other hand, tends to use dominant language to function in their urban context. For example, in Tabanan, a village in Bali, people can communicate by just using Balinese for all daily purposes in the area. In Denpasar, however, *Bahasa Indonesia* is more widely and commonly used than Balinese. The size of group is also important. It is also assumed that the bigger the size of the group, the more likely the language maintenance is to occur. Another factor is intermarriage. It is assumed that intermarriage can also cause language shift in the family, especially intermarriage with a person who speaks the dominant language. For example, an Indonesian who is married to an American in Texas moves to Texas in which English is the dominant language and in which there is very limited Indonesian-speaking community. Then, it is most likely for a language shift to take place.

Majidi (2013) asserts that urbanization can be another factor influencing language shift in multilingual communities. People move from one area to another, bringing their language and culture across border. The mobility creates chances for people from different language and culture or different varieties of the same language and culture to interact with one another. However, the vernacular that the migrants bring with them to the new linguistic context may not have enough support for the vernacular to survive due to lack of function and domain of use.

Another factor that influences language shift and maintenance to occur is attitude. Michieka (2012) states that the language users' view and value system as part of social value and system is the main determinant of language choice and influences people's choice of which language to speak and which one to abandon. He further emphasizes that personal attitudes and values are such strong forces that can influence language maintenance or

language shift. In this sense, bilinguals or multilinguals are free to choose which language they want to keep and which language they want to give up. The term ‘linguistic suicide’ is used by Crystal (2002) to explain how peoples’ attitudes and values of an older generation of a minority language deliberately stops passing the native language and adopting the dominant language as the language in upbringing (in Majidi, 2012).

In this globalized era, people are more mobile, crossing territorial borders. There has been surmounting discourses positioning English as the language of globalization and/or the Lingua Franca for intercultural communication. To become an active member of the globalized world, it is essential to master English. On top of that, English is given a currency in the job market to those who acquire it. It is often advertised that English is the language of commerce, economy, and finance. As Paulston (1988) explains, language shift can take place if the language being shifted to has “social prestige and economic advantage, primarily in the form of source of income” (p. 5). Holmes (2008) adds that job is the most influential economic reason for someone to learn another language. She further explains that business and industry require employees who can use English or other languages used widely in the industry fluently; therefore, job seekers see the need to equip themselves with the language(s). Moreover, being competent in English means better jobs and higher salary.

When languages being assigned to different currency, linguistic competition is most likely to be the normal mode in a linguistic market place. Therefore, language maintenance of the less dominant and/or valued language can be a very challenging task. Batibo (2005) explains that language maintenance is “a situation in which a language maintains its vitality even under pressure” (p.102). Holmes (2008) reveals that there are some factors supporting language maintenance: regarding the ethnic language as important, frequency of contact, degree of frequency of contact with homeland, social factors such as using the language at home, banning intermarriages, associating the use of language with a particular setting like place of worship may also reduce language shift caused by economic pressures, and institutional support since governmental offices, media, press, education, law, or religion are domains of the predominant language. This study would like to explore how bilinguals in a specific linguistic environment view, understand, and interact with various factors that co-exist in their specific context.

## **Research Methodology**

This study works within the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research, as Denzin and Lincoln (1994) explains, “study things in their

natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (cited in Richards, 2013, p. 11). Adopting qualitative paradigm, the two participants were involved in a reflexive narrative activity in which they were asked to reflect back and narrate their own understanding of their inter-linguistic and intercultural experiences through narrative interviewing. Josselson (2013) asserts goal of interviewing is "to document people's experience, self-understanding, and working models of the world they live in..." (p. 2). The data of this kind of interviewing reflect narrative truth. Josselson also emphasizes that the essential purpose of studying someone's narrative is not to measure, predict, or classify them but to *understand* them more extensively or deeply. The focus of studying someone's narrative is on subjectivity. This is in line with the purpose of this study that seeks to understand and explore what the participants experienced and perceived in relation to their interlinguistic and intercultural lives and how they make meaning of these experiences.

This study lays its ground on Josselson's perspective of narrative (in-depth) interviewing. The interviews were conducted individually and in person. For the purpose of constructing and getting personal meaning across, the interviews were conducted in the language that the participants feel comfortable of using. During the interviews, both participants chose to use English with some occasional mixes of English with some Indonesian expressions. Each interview lasted for approximately 45 – 60 minutes with several follow-ups conversations with the participants in gathering further details of the narrative they shared earlier. Data were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively to answer the research questions of this study under the interpretive paradigm. In order to obtain the personal backgrounds of the participants, a questionnaire consisting some questions about the participants' personal background was distributed and filled out before the interview began.

There are two participants who are involved in this narrative interviewing. Ayu (pseudonym), 30 years old, was an educator in an English department of a private university. She was born and raised in Jakarta. Her father is a Balinese and her mother is a Javanese. The family lives in Jakarta. Her grandparents are Balinese and Javanese. When Ayu was a month old, she moved to Palembang with her family for several years and went back to live in Jakarta. When she finished her high school, she continued her study in a university in Denpasar, Bali for four years.

The second participant is Jesse (pseudonym) who is still 19 years old. She was born and raised in Bogor. She is a university student. Jesse's mother was an Australian but she was raised by Javanese foster parents since she was three years old. Jesse's father was a Javanese. Her grandparents from both sides were Javanese. The family lived in Bogor.

The data were analyzed by using content analysis method. Content analysis, according to Franekel and Wallen (2008) is “a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communication” (p. 472). They also explain that the analysis are usually in the form of written contents such as textbooks, essays, newspapers, novels, and others; however, the content of any type of communication can be analyzed, since it contains beliefs, attitudes, values and ideas of a person or group both consciously or unconsciously.

The data were analyzed in several stages. First, identifying the key events of each family related to languages they speak. Then, the languages used in the three generations were highlighted. Next, the data were analyzed for any indications of language shifts, language maintenance, and language loss and factors causing them. Lastly, the findings of the two families were compared and contrasted with relevant previous studies and theories.

## Findings and discussion

### *The participants' linguistic history*

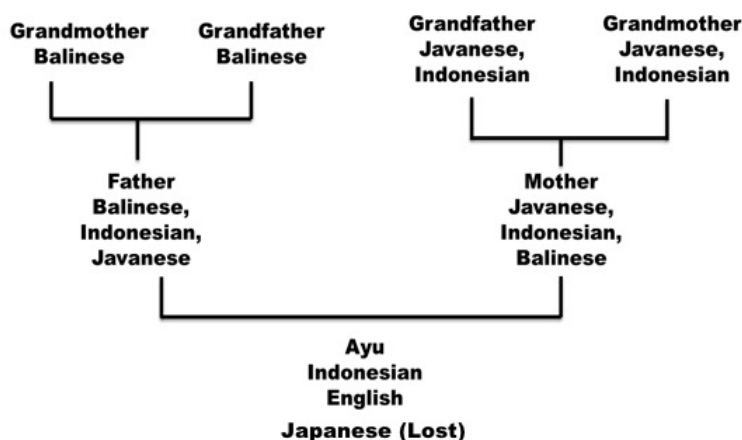
**Ayu's family** lived in Jakarta. Her grandparents from her mother's side came from Yogyakarta, so both of them spoke Javanese. Ayu's mother was raised in Javanese culture and she spoke Javanese fluently, while her father came from Bali and spoke Balinese fluently. Her grandparents from her father's side live in Tabanan, Bali where people still use Balinese in daily conversation. Ayu was born and raised in Jakarta. When she was a few month old, her parents moved to Palembang, and the family lived there for four years. Although Ayu's parents spoke Javanese and Balinese fluently, they did not pass on those two languages to their children, Ayu and her sister. Ayu claims that her parents only passed on Javanese and Balinese cultures (i.e. cultural products, values, and way of thinking) but not the languages. The parents communicated with each other and with their children in Indonesian. The parents only spoke Javanese and Balinese when they talked to their parents (Ayu's grandparents). Ayu pointed out that there were some similarities between Balinese and Javanese in vocabulary, so their parents could communicate in local languages with their in-laws. Ayu herself used Indonesian to communicate with her grandparents from her mother's side. On the other hand, she had to ask her little cousins to translate for her when she wanted to communicate with her Balinese grandparents since the grandparents did not speak Indonesian.

Ayu spent her university years in Bali. Although she studied and stayed in Bali for four years to complete her study, she was still unable to speak Balinese. She confessed that she only knew some fixed expressions for informal chit-chat. When asked about her Balinese, she explained that

although her Balinese peers used Balinese among themselves, they would switch to Bahasa Indonesia when conversing with her.

However, Indonesian was not the only language she spoke, she also learned and used English. She took English literature as her major in her undergraduate program. In her department, she was required to learn another foreign language as an elective program, and chose Japanese. However, she confessed that she completely forgot her Japanese although she had learnt the language for four semesters. In short the language dynamics in Ayu's life can be represented in diagram 1.

**Diagram 1**  
Ayu's family language dynamics



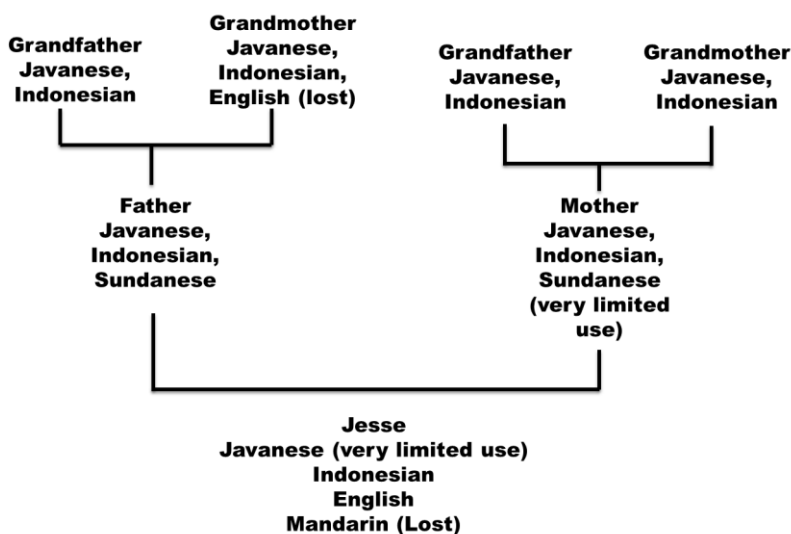
From diagram 1 above, it can be seen that there is a case of language shift in the third generation. The second generation in Ayu's family from both sides maintained their local languages (Balinese and Javanese) which were passed on by the first generation. However, the second generation did not pass the local languages to the third generation. Ayu's parents chose to use Indonesian as the means of communication at home. However, there is an incident of language addition in Ayu's case. Ayu learned two foreign languages which were English and Japanese. Of the two foreign languages learnt, she maintained English but lost Japanese due to lack of use and domains of use. English actually became the language of her profession as an English lecturer.

**Jesse's family** is a rather unique family. Jesse's grandfather came from Australia. He went to Bogor, Indonesia, as an activist, and he took his little daughter, i.e. Jesse's mother. Unfortunately, the father passed away and the little daughter had to stay in an orphanage for several years before she was adopted by a Javanese family who moved in Bogor from Solo due



to job placement. Jesse's mother could not understand Indonesian until she was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of elementary school. Being exposed with Javanese at home and Indonesian at school, Jesse's mother lost her English language. When Jesse's mother went to a university in Bogor, she met Jesse's father and they got married. Jesse's father came from Madiun, East Java. He moved to Bogor with his family. They both spoke Javanese fluently as well as *Bahasa Indonesia*. Since Jesse's father worked in the field of marketing and had to make sales with local people, he acquired Sundanese. Although Jesse's parents could speak local languages, they preferred to communicate in Indonesian with the family members. The children therefore only acquire and use Bahasa Indonesia at home. At school, the children use *Bahasa Indonesia* and learnt foreign languages. English was learnt since kindergarten and Jesse had Mandarin lesson since she was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade until high school. Jesse revealed that she completely forgot her Chinese but maintained English by joining an English course and watching American movies. In short the languages in Jesse's family are shown in diagram 2.

**Diagram 2**  
Jesse's family language dynamics



From diagram 2, it can be seen that there is a case of language attrition and language addition in the third generation. The second generation still maintained local languages, Javanese, that was passed from the first generation. The second generation acquired Sundanese since they lived in that culture. However, the parents did not pass on Javanese and Sundanese to Jesse, the third generation. Jesse describes that she used to know and able to use Javanese when she interacted with her grandparents in the past. However, today, she rarely used Javanese anymore and beginning

to lose confidence in that language. She claims that she could understand her parents when they were using Javanese (passive knowledge of the language), but could not reply to them in Javanese. She also claims that she could speak basic Sundanese since she learned it as a subject at school, i.e. *Bahasa Daerah* (local language). Besides *Bahasa Indonesia*, Jesse also learnt and acquired English in the university where she is currently studying.

From the three generations of the two families, the language shift happens to the local languages. Although the three generations model (Fishman 1991) applied in immigrant minority case, similar situation seems to apply in these two participants' context in Indonesia as well. The following sections will discuss some factors contributing to language shift, attrition, and preference as found in the interview data.

### ***Factors contributing to language shift, attrition, and preference***

Urbanization for economic reason combined with limited language use domains seems to be influencing factors to the family's language shift and attrition phenomena and use of dominant language in practice. In the case of Ayu's family, urbanization and intercultural family background influence her parents' decision to use *Bahasa Indonesia* instead of using Javanese to converse with each other. Ayu's parents moved to and raised Ayu in Jakarta in which the dominant language is not Javanese and Balinese. The dominant language in use in Ayu's family environment (such as parent's work place, neighborhood, school) is mostly *Bahasa Indonesia* (sometimes with a mixture of Jakartan dialect). Similarly, Jesse's parents moved from Java to Bogor in which the dominant language is not Javanese but Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia. Since their move to Bogor was for her parents' career, Bahasa Indonesia (as the lingua franca and language of education) is considered as the more immediate language that needs to be acquired by the children. The parents, therefore, chose to use Bahasa Indonesia with their children. Jesse only experienced her early childhood using Javanese with her grandparents but when she moved to Bogor, she had little opportunity to communicate with her grandparents in Javanese. Jesse admits that she had very little knowledge of Javanese language.

The second overlapping factor is the amount of contact with people sharing the same language. Holmes (2008) stated that the frequency of contact helps language maintenance. However, as it can be seen from Jesse's case, she gradually lost Javanese due to less contact with her grandparents. Jesse revealed that her grandparents used Javanese to her when she was spending time with them at their house.

*...because my foster grandparents are from Solo, most of the time, they speak in Javanese. And, that's why when I was a*

*child, I can speak Javanese more fluently than when I am right now because when I was a child...my parents asked my grandparents to babysit and they only speak Javanese. So, I understand what they spoke and when I have something to say, I just use Javanese of course. But, now I lost it.*

This confirms Michieka's (2012) study that reveals limited contact with the family who spoke the local languages can cause shift. Similarly, Ayu spent most of her life in Jakarta where the dominant language is Bahasa Indonesia (with a mixture of Jakartan dialect). Although her parents speak Javanese and Balinese fluently, they chose not to pass down the language to her. Therefore, Ayu adopted Bahasa Indonesia as the dominant language to be able to function in the immediate community.

The third influencing factor is education. The 1945 Indonesia Constitution states that the national language of the country is *Bahasa Indonesia*. In education sector, Bahasa Indonesia is the official language to be used for academic activities (the language of instruction, national examination, classroom activities, academic textbooks, etc.) in all education levels from primary to tertiary level. This is stated clearly in the national language policy, the National Law No. 4/1950 Chap. IV Art. 5 on language (*UURI No.4/1950 jo UU No. 12 / 1954 Bab IV tentang Bahasa Pasal 5*). Although the Law allows the use of local language to be used as the medium of instruction (MOI) from kindergarten up to the third grade level of elementary school, in practice, Bahasa Indonesia is widely used in most schools across Indonesia. One of the reasons of the adoption of Bahasa Indonesia as MOI is the mobility of people from one area to another. To accommodate students coming from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, Bahasa Indonesia is adopted as the lingua franca at school. Both participants stated that Indonesian is their language at school. They use Indonesian in daily communication in and outside classroom. Jesse explains that at her school in Bogor, the local language Sundanese is taught as a lesson within the local curriculum (2 – 3 hours / week). Ayu, on the other hand, experienced her education (in the capital city of Jakarta) in Bahasa Indonesia. There was no local language subject offered at her school. Apparently, not all schools include local language subject within their local curriculum. It can be seen that Bahasa Indonesia serves the function as the language of education nationwide whereas the local language has less institutional support that is given an allocated time of 2-3 hours / week.

On another related matter to education factor that may overlap with the attitude towards language factor, there seems to be a high interest in acquiring other Foreign Languages as some private schools in Jakarta use English in their school environment as the language of language of

instructions (spoken and written) and social communication (among peers outside classroom). In this type of school, globalization has often been assigned as the reason for creating an English-speaking domain at school to implement new linguistic behavior for the students. English is positioned as the language of globalization that attracts parents (usually from high socio-economic background) to put their children in this type of school. Since English has been given a status and a currency of economic value, the local languages may not seem to be on the list of priorities to parents and their children. This can be seen on how Ayu and Jesse highly value English as a capital (Bourdieu, 1977) for the betterment of their future economic and social status. Ayu and Jesse, therefore, made a decision to prioritize the acquisition of English that lead to language addition into their linguistic repertoire. This mind set can be seen from Ayu's and Jesse's narratives when they were asked to share their opinion of the value of each language to them and their intention to pass on certain languages to their next generation.

*Ayu: Maybe English first and then Balinese and then Bahasa Indonesia*

*Interviewer: Why is English the most important?*

*Ayu: In globalization era, English is important, right? Surely, I don't want my children to be left behind. Even preschool students learn English today. If you go to the mall, you would hear many Elementary students speak English with their Moms and Dads. If I could speak Mandarin too, it would be nice, but too bad I can't.*

Ayu in this excerpt emphasizes the importance of learning Foreign Languages (such as English and Mandarin) as her imagination of the world of globalization. The possibility of having to cross borders, interact with people from various linguistic and cultural background, participate in international events are clearly projected by Jesse in the excerpt below:

*Jesse: I think English is a must. ...because ...from then, up to now, English is an international language. The language that people use everywhere so when someone go to another country... and they cannot speak the local language, they just use English to communicate. ...So, I think English is a must.*

*Interviewer: So, English is a must. How about Bahasa Indonesia?*

*Jesse: Well, because it is ...Bahasa Indonesia is the native language, I will introduce it to them. But, if later, I*

*live in another country, and... they cannot speak Bahasa Indonesia, that's okay with me. It is not a must for them to speak Bahasa Indonesia. I mean they must know Bahasa Indonesia but they don't have to be able to speak it fluently.*

*Interviewer: What about Sundanese and Javanese?*

*Jesse: ...I mean I will still understand Javanese and Sundanese, but I'm not good at it. So, I'm not going to teach it to my children because what will I teach them if I'm bad at it too.*

From Ayu's and Jesse's narratives, there is a sense of immediate pressure to acquire English rather than their parents' vernaculars. This may explain their less interest in investing for their parents' vernaculars. Their shifting to Bahasa Indonesia can be influenced by their intercultural background, urbanization, language use domain, language status, as well as language function to their specific linguistic conditions and immediate needs. The complexities of the inter-relations among these factors are further explored in the following section.

### ***"They didn't introduce me to my root": The struggle of identifying oneself***

Although there are several indications of language shift, attrition, and preference, the two participants display their distress in registering to the traditional view of identity. When asked about whether they identify themselves with particular linguistic and cultural backgrounds, both participants struggle very much. Ayu, in particular, reveals her in-between-ness self-perception. She describes her perception as follows:

*My friends in Bali said that I'm more likely to be a Jakartan [laughing]. ....Since I ...I am a mix of Javanese and Balinese but... I was born in Jakarta and raised in Jakarta, so they said that I'm a Jakartan. But, when I go back to Jakarta, most people say I'm a Balinese. ...Ya, I tend to [identify myself with] Jakarta people, because basically I was born here so ya... Jakartan.*

Coming from an intercultural family background and being a non-speaker of Balinese nor Javanese, it seems comfortable for her to identify herself with the place where she was born and spent most of her life in, Jakarta. Although she was not totally being acknowledged by her surroundings as a Balinese or a Jakartan, she felt that she is more attached to Jakartan culture and identity. At home, as Ayu explains, her parents imparted Javanese and Balinese values and cultures despite the fact that they did not

pass on Balinese or Javanese language to her. Outside of home, she is more exposed to the metropolitan Jakarta culture and dialect. This sense of attachment to Jakartan identity was reinforced during her four year experience of studying in Bali. She explains that she felt that her root was in Bali but her surroundings did not seem to agree with her sense of self during her stay there. She elaborates that her Balinese friends, instead of teaching her Balinese, were more interested to adopt her Jakartanese dialect. She realizes that perhaps her friends were trying to be more accommodating to her. Ayu admits that her peers interest in Jakartanese dialects as interesting and puzzling at the same time. Her peers interest in her Jakartanese dialect is most likely due to their perception towards Ayu as a Jakartan rather than a Balinese. Therefore, her peers did not feel that Ayu needs to speak Balinese with them. This multi layers and interactions in diverse situations is most likely the reason for her reluctance of registering herself to her parents' linguistic and ethnic backgrounds.

Unable to speak Javanese and Balinese, Ayu felt a sense of guilt and of being root-less. She later explains that when she had children in the future, she would introduce them to Javanese and Balinese language. She describes this strong intention as follows:

*Ayu: I don't want to make the same mistake as my parents [laughing].*

*Interviewer: You think your parents make a mistake?*

*Ayu: Ya. They didn't introduce me to my root so that's why I'm like this [laughing]. So, that's why I want them [her future children] to learn about their root...*

Ayu, in this conversation, displays her guilt for not being able to speak Balinese and Javanese that seems to affect her self-perception. Ayu's narrative reflects her understanding of a direct linguistic – culture association as part of an identity that she found it difficult to register herself into. She may interpret this as the reason for her sense of rootless-ness.

Similarly, Jesse also prefers to associate herself with her birth place. When asked how she would answer to a question "where do you come from?", Jesse explained herself as follows:

*I'll say I'm from Bogor... But, right. [If someone ask me,] "Are you Sundanese?" No, I'm not Sundanese. I'm ...apayanamanya [how should I say this]. ...People call me a blasteran [mixed-cultural] child who is being raised by Javanese parents and that my parents understand Sundanese and Javanese.*

Viewing herself from the perspective of her mother's background (an Australian being adopted by a Javanese family at a very young age), she felt an uncomfortable feeling of having to register herself as a local member of the immediate society [a pure blood of Sundanese and Indonesian, not a mixed-blood]. Her mother was adopted by a Central Javanese [*Solo*] family at the age of three and was raised with Javanese language and cultural values. Her physical appearance did not quite suite what the locals imagine as a typical Javanese. Jesse's mother got married to Jesse's father who is an Eastern Javanese [*Madiun*] which later settled in Bogor, a Sundanese-speaking territory. Jesse further elaborates how she felt liberated by viewing herself as an Indonesian rather than a Sundanese or a Javanese.

*Well, it looks like I'm being surrounded by more than one culture. But to be honest, I feel more like a pure Indonesian without being attached to one culture or another. Because...since I was little, my parents use Bahasa[Indonesia] as our mother tongue. And, as for Javanese language, it's never been my mother tongue. My parents just used it to talk to my mom's parents. For Sundanese language...actually I've learn that from school and it will be used when my dad and I talked to other Sundanese people... for negotiating or just having a small conversations with them. I'm not good using both Javanese and Sundanese language. It's more like I understand what other people say to me, but I'm not really comfortable replying back to them in those languages. And for Javanese culture, well, I think my parents introduced us to its values and culture, for traditional ceremonies, like Sepasaran and Puputan. And lastly, for Australia culture, well, as I said, my mother being adopted since she was a kid, so I never once knew what Australian culture feels like.*

Seeing herself as an Indonesian relieves Jesse from having to restrict herself to one cultural background of one of her parents. Much of her linguistic and cultural experiences are mediated by *Bahasa Indonesia*. She, therefore, feels more comfortable to associate herself with the idea of an Indonesian with multicultural background. Although she does not feel confident in her spoken use of Sundanese and Javanese, she chose to see her multilingual and multicultural family background as elements that enrich her sense of self.

## Conclusion

Looking at the two participants' family linguistic history, there are indications of language shift, attrition, and addition. The first generations of the two participants came from a monolingual and monocultural background. Therefore, the second generation of the families still used their vernaculars as the dominant language in the family and their immediate community. As the second generation family expanded to be a diverse family and moved to a new linguistic environment, a new linguistic behavior was adopted. Bahasa Indonesia was adopted as the language of communication at home to accommodate the diversity of the family members. Bahasa Indonesia is most likely chosen by the second generation for practical reasons: Bahasa Indonesia as language of education and wider communication. Therefore, the second generation would prefer to adopt Bahasa Indonesia rather than to pass on their vernaculars to the third generation. Lack of domain of language use in the new linguistic context can also influence the second generation's decision of shifting to Bahasa Indonesia for communication with their children.

Instances of valorizing Foreign Languages can also be captured from the third generations' narrative. The pressure of the fast changing flow of globalization motivates the third generations to acquire Foreign Languages, such as English and Mandarin. English, especially, was assigned to high currency of socio-economic status. Participants reveal an immediate priority of learning and acquiring English rather than their parents' vernaculars.

The participants' diverse background and situated language practice in several contexts influence the way they perceive themselves. Both participants struggle to register to one of their parents' linguistic and cultural background. Rather, both participants construct their own understanding of who they are that goes beyond the traditional view of identity. Both participants prefer to see themselves as a Jakartan (Ayu) and an Indonesian (Jesse) with a multicultural and multilingual family background and history, relieving themselves from the idea of "purist" perspective of identity.

## The Authors

Siana Linda Bonafixis currently a doctoral student in Applied English Linguistics at Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya. She received a Bachelor's degree in English Language Education and Teacher's Training from *Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana* and a Master's degree in Educational Technology with a concentration in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from *Universitas Pelita Harapan*. She is also



teaching English at LPPT *Universitas Tarumanagara*. In the field of research, she is interested in sociolinguistics and EFL.

Christine Manara lectures in the Postgraduate Programme of Applied English Linguistics at *Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya*. Her research interests include teaching methodology, teachers' professional learning and identity, and English as a Lingua Franca Pedagogy.

## References

- Batibo, H.M. (1992). The fate of ethnic languages in Tanzania. In M. Brenzinger (Ed.), *Language death: factual and theoretical explorations with special reference to east africa*. Mouton De Gruyter.
- Batibo, H.M. (2005). Language shift and death in africa. In John Edwards (Ed.), *Language decline and death in africa: causes, consequences and challenges*. Multilingual Matters.
- Beck, D., & Lam, Y. (n.d). Language loss and linguistic suicide: a case study from the sierra norte de puebla, mexico. University of Alberta. [sites.ualberta.ca](http://sites.ualberta.ca).
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. (R. Nice, Trans.). New York: Cambridge University Press (Original work published 1972).
- Cohn, A.C., & Ravindranath, M. (2014). Local languages in Indonesia: language maintenance or language shift? *Linguistik Indonesia*, 32(2), 131-148.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2<sup>nd</sup>ed). Cambridge University Press.
- Fishman, J.A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: theoretical and empirical assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N.E. (2008). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (7<sup>th</sup>ed.). McGraw Hill.
- Holmes, J. (2008). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). England: Pearson.
- Hornsberger, N.H. (2010). Language shift and language revitalization. In R. Kaplan (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Huda, N. (2000). *Kedudukan dan fungsi bahasa asing*. In Lauder, A. (2008). The status and function of English in Indonesia: a review of key factors. *Makara, Sosial Humaniora*, 12(1), 9-20.
- Jenkins, J. (2003). *World Englishes: a resource book for students*. Routledge English Language Introductions Series.
- Josselson, R. (2013). *Interviewing for qualitative inquiry: A relational approach*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- Lauder, A. (2008). The status and function of English in Indonesia: a review of key factors. *Makara, SosialHumaniora*, 12(1), 9-20.
- Lee, S.K. (2003). Exploring the relationship between language, culture and identity. *Gema Online Journal of Language Studies*.3(2).
- Li, W. (1996). *Three generations, two languages , one family: language choice and language shift in a chinese community in britain*. Multilingual Matters.
- Majidi, A. (2013). English as a global language; threat or opportunity for minority languages? *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy, 4(11).
- Mesthrie, R., Swann, J., Deumer, A. and Leap, W. L. (2009). *Introducing Sociolinguistics (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Michieka, M. (2012). Language maintenance and shift among kenyan university students. *Selected Proceeding of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, ed. Bruce Cornell and Nicholas Rolle, 164-170. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceeding Project. [www.lingref.com.document #2746](http://www.lingref.com/document#2746).
- Musgrave (2011). *Language Shift and language maintenance in Indonesia*. Monash University.
- Nababan, P.W.J. (1985). Bilingualism in Indonesia: ethnic language maintenance and the spread of the national language. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*.
- Ortman, J.M., & Stevens, G. (2008). Shift happens, but when? Inter and intra generational language shift among hispanicamericans. Population Association of America 2008 Annual Meeting Program, Retrieved 28 November 2016, from [paa2008.princeton.edu](http://paa2008.princeton.edu).
- Paauw, S. (2009). One land, one nation, one language: an analysis of indonesia's national language policy. In H. Lehnert-Le-Houillier and A.B. Fine (Eds.), *University of Rochester Working Papers in the Language Sciences*, 5(1), 2-16.
- Paulston, C.B. (1988). *International handbook of bilingualism and bilingual education*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tan, S. & Ng, B.C. (2010). Three generations under one roof: a study of the influence of the presence of grandparents on language shift, identity and attitudes. *Travauxneuchâtelois de linguistique*, 52, 69-92.
- Zhang, D. (2004). Home language maintenance among second generation Chinese American children. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics* 19/2: 33-53.

Zhang, D (2010). Language maintenance and language shift among Chinese immigrant parents and their second-generation children in the U.S..*Bilingual Research Journal*, 33(1), 42-60.